

What is it & Why it is important

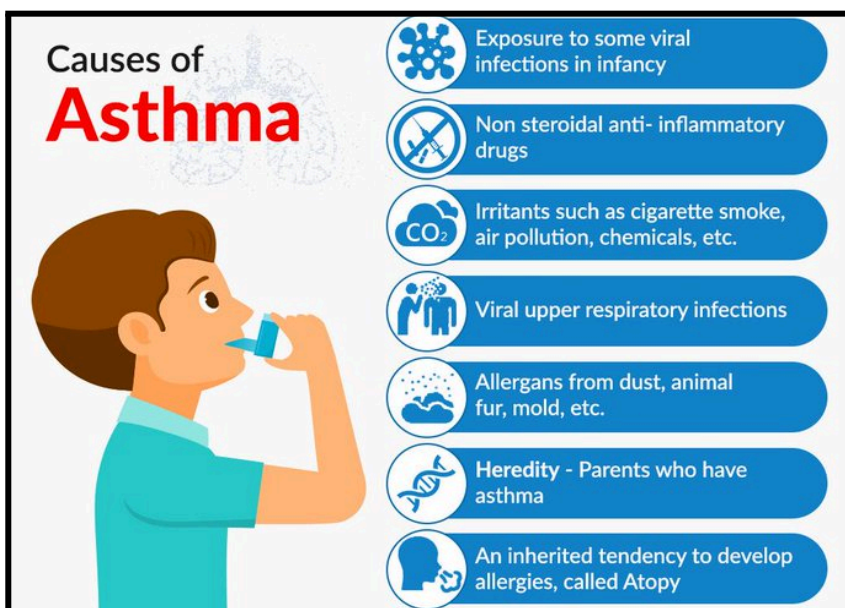
Asthma, or bronchial asthma, is a chronic lung disease characterised by inflammation and narrowing of the airways, which can lead to breathing difficulties. This condition affects individuals of all ages and can significantly disrupt daily life, potentially resulting in life-threatening asthma attacks. While asthma cannot be cured, its symptoms can be effectively managed through various treatments and lifestyle adjustments.

What is the Asthma attack?

An asthma attack, also called an asthma exacerbation, is when airways suddenly become more inflamed and constricted than usual, leading to severe difficulty in breathing due to increased mucus production. They also lead to wheezing, chest tightness or pain, coughing, fatigue, rapid breathing, and difficulty speaking due to breathlessness.

What are the signs that Asthma might be worsening:

- Increased frequency of symptoms
- Persistent waking up at night due to asthma symptoms
- Increased use of rescue inhaler
- Medications do not provide the usual relief or require higher doses.
- Struggling with routine activities or exercise due to breathlessness.
- Changes in peak flow readings



Source: [National Health Portal-India](#)

What are the reasons for getting Asthma:

While the exact cause of asthma remains unknown, there are several factors that have been identified that can increase the likelihood of developing the condition.

Complications of Asthma:

If asthma is poorly managed, it can result in serious complications, including:

- Reduced lung function such as permanent narrowing of the bronchial tubes.
- Sleep disturbances lead to fatigue and a lower quality of life.
- Side effects from long-term medication use, such as weight gain or osteoporosis.
- Higher risk of respiratory infections such as pneumonia and the flu (influenza).

How to Diagnose Asthma:

Asthma is diagnosed through a combination of:

- **Medical history and physical exam**
 - Your doctor will ask about your symptoms, family history, and potential triggers.
 - They will examine your chest, eyes, ears, nose and throat for signs of congestion, wheezing and allergic reactions.
- **Lung function tests**
 - Spirometry measures how much air you can breathe in and out, and how fast.
 - Peak flow testing measures how well your lungs push out air.
 - Methacholine challenge tests your lung function before and after inhaling a chemical to see if it narrows your airways.
- **Other tests**
 - The exhaled nitric oxide test measures inflammation in your lungs.
 - Chest X-ray or CT scan rules out other conditions.
 - Allergy testing identifies triggers.

Treatment for Asthma:

Asthma treatment focuses on controlling symptoms and preventing attacks, as there is currently no definite cure for the condition. The plan typically involves a combination of medications and lifestyle adjustments tailored to the individual's needs.

How Asthma Affects Daily Life and What You Can Do Prevent

- **Medications** are used to prevent attacks, which can provide short-term relief during attacks and long-term prevention. Consult your doctor before use and do not self-medicate.
- **Limiting exposure to substances** that may trigger your symptoms, such as allergens, smoke, and pollution, is crucial for managing asthma.
- **Biologic therapies** may be administered via injection to reduce inflammation and prevent severe asthma attacks if needed.

Prevention:

Some steps to prevent asthma attacks include:

- Taking daily medicines as prescribed. Keep Asthma in control.
- Avoiding triggers as much as possible including travel to places having high allergens like pollen.
- Using quick-relief medicine at the first sign of symptoms
- Wear a mask when going outdoors, especially during high pollen seasons
- Wash bedding frequently in hot water
- Getting recommended vaccinations like flu

To Know More:

- [COPD: Causes, Symptoms, Treatment and Prevention](#)
- [Protecting Against Pneumonia](#)
- [Constant Coughing could be Bronchitis](#)

My Health, My Responsibility